

OP-EDS

PAY ATTENTION TO THAT WOMAN BEHIND THE VOTING BOOTH CURTAIN

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Oz creator L. Frank Baum isn't the only one to keep an eye on Kansas from afar. Public domain.

“What’s the matter with Kansas?” is a question sure to be asked whether or not the state’s voters decide to ratify Value Them Both on August 2.

The proposed amendment would overturn the 2019 Kansas Supreme Court verdict *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt*, which *Kansas Reflector* reporter Allison Kite [notes](#) was something of “a state-level *Roe*.” While among other restraints, “patients seeking abortions must sit through waiting periods and efforts to persuade them against the procedure,” it did reliably guarantee a baseline of access. Though the result was

far from laissez-faire, let alone opponents' fever dreams of state-subsidized abortion on demand, removing it would set the stage for efforts at more restrictive policies up to a near-total ban.

In 2018, Eric Flint took a break from writing an alternate history of the 1630s to **foresee** that an impending repeal of *Roe* would not only unleash immediate moves to restrict abortion in "15 to 20 states" but that an equal number would "immediately liberalize abortion back to where it was decades ago before the right succeeded in chipping away at it." Flint added that the steady liberalization of views on abortion in urban centers nationwide would give the pro-choice side an advantage beyond the relatively even divide between the two at the state level.

A decisive popular veto of Value Them Both would not only reaffirm the right of abortion for Kansans (and for the Missourians who account for nearly half of the **abortions** in their neighboring state). It could serve as a model for state-level *Roes* in other contested states. So could a backlash if Value Them Both's passing proves to be against the tide of public opinion.

The Garrison Center's Thomas L. Knapp has noted ("**Abortion: No, Dobbs Isn't 'Decentralization'**," June 25) that "decisions concerning abortion were largely decentralized to the lowest possible level, that of individual choice ... such decisions are now largely centralized into the hands of state legislatures."

The outcome of Kansas's referendum could revive *Roe*'s decentralization of choice to the individual by decentralizing it to the states. Then Dorothy and her little fetus too won't have to travel to Oz.

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